

CLAIMS

1. A method of configuring a subscriber unit for operation in a wireless communication system, comprising the steps of, at the subscriber unit:
- 5 obtaining a set of available wireless services from an information source that advertises wireless services, including information corresponding to a brokering agent that provides automated brokering services for a plurality of independent service providers;
- supplying to the brokering agent a particular criteria related to at least one of the set of
- 10 available wireless services;
- receiving from the brokering agent a list of service providers meeting the particular criteria;
- selecting a particular service provider from the list of service providers;
- establishing a subscription relationship with the particular service provider; and
- 15 configuring the subscriber unit to operate in a mode that supports interaction with the particular service provider.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of causing the brokering agent to accept bids from among a plurality of competing service providers that provide
- 20 service according to the particular criteria.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of obtaining comprises the step of receiving an over-the-air transmission from a frequency modulated broadcast channel having information on wireless services available from a plurality of independent service
- 25 providers.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of selecting comprises the steps of:
- presenting the obtained information on the available wireless services on an output device associated with the subscriber unit; and
- 30 accepting a set of selected services via an input device associated with the subscriber unit.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of configuring comprises the step of creating operating modes within the subscriber unit to support differing wireless communication protocols.

6. A method of configuring a subscriber unit for operation in a wireless communication system, comprising the steps of, at the subscriber unit:

5 obtaining information on available wireless services and corresponding service providers from an information source that advertises wireless services; selecting for subscription a set of wireless services from the available wireless services that meet a criteria which criteria includes compatibility with the subscriber unit; establishing a subscription relationship with at least one selected service providers
10 corresponding to the set of wireless services selected; and configuring the subscriber unit to construct at least one operating mode that supports interaction with the at least one selected service provider using at least in part information received while establishing the subscription relationship.

15 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the steps of: supplying to a brokering agent a particular criteria related to at least one of the available wireless services; and causing the brokering agent to accept bids from among a plurality of competing service providers that provide a particular desired service according to the
20 particular criteria.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of obtaining information comprises the step of receiving an over-the-air transmission on a broadcast channel, the transmission having information on wireless services available from one or more service providers.

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9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of configuring comprises the step of creating operating modes within the subscriber unit to support differing wireless communication protocols.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the broadcast channel is a frequency modulated channel.

11. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of obtaining information comprises the
5 step of receiving an over-the-air transmission from a wireless local area network having information on available wireless services.

11. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of obtaining information comprises the
5 step of receiving an over-the-air transmission from a wireless local area network having information on available wireless services.

12. A method of subscribing to wireless services, comprising the steps of:
- operating a subscriber unit to obtain information on available wireless services from
an agent that provides information on available wireless services from a plurality of
independent service providers;
- presenting the obtained information on the available wireless services on an output
device associated with the subscriber unit;
- accepting a set of selected services via an input device associated with the subscriber
unit; and
- establishing a subscription relationship with at least one service provider including the
steps of:
- supplying to the agent a particular criteria related to at least one of the available
wireless services;
- causing the agent to accept bids satisfying the particular criteria from among a
plurality of competing service providers that provide at least one of the
available wireless services.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of obtaining information comprises
the step of receiving an over-the-air transmission from a broadcast channel having
information on wireless services available from a plurality of independent service
providers.

14. A method of subscribing to wireless services, comprising the steps of:
causing a subscriber unit to access an information source that advertises wireless
services from a plurality of independent service providers to obtain information on
5 available wireless services;
establishing a subscription relationship with at least one service provider of the
plurality of independent service providers through an automated brokering process,
initiated at the subscriber unit, that compares service offerings among the plurality
of independent service providers, using the obtained information.

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15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of causing a subscriber unit to access
an information source comprises the step of receiving, by the subscriber unit, an over-the-
air transmission from a broadcast channel having information on wireless services
available from a plurality of independent service providers.

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16. A method of subscribing to wireless services, comprising the steps of:
- causing a subscriber unit, having no affiliation with any service provider, to receive an
- 5 over-the-air transmission from a frequency modulated broadcast channel having
- information on wireless services available from a plurality of independent service
- providers; and
- establishing a subscription relationship with at least one service provider of the
- plurality of independent service providers through an automated brokering process,
- initiated at the subscriber unit, that compares service offerings among the plurality
- 10 of independent service providers, using the obtained information.

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17. A method of subscribing an electronic communication unit to a wireless services, comprising the steps of, at the communication unit:

5 accepting a request for a particular wireless service from an input device associated
with the communication unit;
when the particular wireless service is not currently supported by the communication
unit:
 automatically obtaining information on available wireless services and the
 corresponding service providers from an agent that advertises available
10 wireless services;
 establishing a subscription relationship with one of the service providers that
 offers the particular wireless service, based on information obtained from the
agent.

15 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of automatically obtaining
information comprises the step of receiving an over-the-air transmission from a broadcast
channel having information on wireless services available from a plurality of independent
service providers.

20 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of establishing a subscription
relationship comprises the steps of:
 supplying to a brokering agent a particular criteria related to the particular wireless
 service; and
 causing the brokering agent to accept bids satisfying the particular criteria from
25 among a plurality of competing service providers that provide the particular
wireless service.